1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

sex). This applies also to the extension of that relationship beyond the scope of the blood tie as it appears in genealogies (this is discussed on p. 33). No direct payment is offered or expected in such a case, but the recipient is, of course, liable to be called upon in his turn.

Apart from this, the native expects neither to give nor to receive 'something for nothing', unless it be a smouldering ember, which corresponds to our asking for a match.

An exception to this occurs in the case of plantation labourers returning from their three years of service. A certain proportion of their earnings is paid to them as a lump sum at the end of their 'time', and this they usually expend on knives, mouth-organs, and such other trifles as their hearts delight in. But as soon as they return to their own village, friends and relations crowd around, expecting the treasures to be divided amongst them, so that very soon the unfortunate owner has little to show for his labour except the memory of having been for a brief moment the hero of the village.

RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES

There are many occasions on which a presentation of some article, usually a package of ceremonial pudding, is reciprocated by the return, at some future, but not too far distant, time, of a precisely similar article. It would be a gross breach of etiquette to omit to 'back' such a gift in appropriate fashion. When we went to meet the women of Baniu to trade with them for good taro stalks for planting, we took with us some large packets of ceremonial pudding to give to one of them in return for some that had been given on the occasion of Muben's marriage to Kakari several months before.

PROPERTY

Land.

The land belongs to the village group. But the rights in it are vested in the *tuonam tʃan*, the man of greatest importance in the village or group of hamlets. He may sell it, either to other natives or to white men, but in practice he would consult the older men of the village before arranging such a transaction. No such deal went through during my residence, and I have no details of prices or media of payment.[1] Pinari had a grudge against Karabun, the

[1] The District Officer now supervises all buying of land by white people from natives, and adjudicates over the price, which is paid in money. Some of the

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

tsunaun tʃan at Tabut, because his forefathers had sold the land where the village of Tabut now stands to Karabun's forefathers for a sum which, Pinari contended, covered only the site of the village, and not the bush behind it, potentially useful for taro gardens. The other side claimed that the payment made for the village site was enough for this also. Pinari used to make spasmodic attempts to extract additional payment from Karabun, but without success. 425 565

Land thus vested in the *tsunaun* descends of right to his heir to this office, his eldest sister's eldest son. But all the people of the group have the right to hunt or to gather wild fruits or berries in it, and to take water or fish from pools, or leaves for thatch, &c., irrespective of clan. 423 565

Certain spots, a particular group of rocks, a clump of trees, a pool, are considered to be the special property of one or other of the clans, because some spirit is supposed to dwell there who is intimately concerned with that particular clan. This subject will be further discussed in Chapter XV. 423 614

The amount of land to be cleared for a new taro garden is decided by discussion, according to the purpose for which the taro is required. The garden is held in common in so far as it is enclosed by one fence, which all the men help to erect, but each man sets up a certain portion of this fence, which he is responsible for keeping in good condition. The Petats people divided the plots according to the uprights in the fence, each man taking, as a rule, the space between two uprights for each of his dependants, e.g. wives and children. The Kurtatchi people divide the garden by means of logs laid on the ground (see Pl. 40). At the original division which takes place when the worst of the bush has been cleared from the new garden, each man will take a plot for each of his wives, one for his sister if she be a widow living in the same village, and sometimes others for his children. A little girl can own a plot of taro, which her mother will help her to tend. The mother will probably destroy this taro if the child dies. For the further clearing of these plots from underbrush the man who annexed them is personally responsible, and his womenfolk must plant it and keep it weeded. They are entitled to take the produce for themselves and their families. If any one wants more taro than there is on her own plot, 417 423 621 423

earlier deals are still the subject of dispute, the natives asserting that the white men did not pay all that they promised.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

however, permitted to shoot in return, and as far as I could make out, the affair was generally hardly more than a form. This procedure is now, however, no longer permitted, matters of this kind being dealt with by the District Officer.

The theft of other property, even of pigs, is regarded as a minor offence, over which the injured parties are very angry and talk a great deal, but eventually agree to the settlement of the affair by the payment of a fine. I have a story of a man called Tianowan, living at Ruri, who stole a pig belonging to Mudidemets, which he killed and ate. He was made to pay back a pig to Mudidemets, which was killed and eaten by the two men together, 'then Mudidemets was not angry with Tianowan any more'. Another story tells how a group of boys were always stealing bananas belonging to a man who lived at a neighbouring village. One day he caught them, and brought them to his place, and held them prisoners. The *tsunaun* of their own village brought a length of *beroan* to pay the owner of the bananas to let them go; he said that was not enough, so the *tsunaun* paid him two lengths, and he let the boys go. I did not personally experience any cases of theft, although I neglected the advice of the planters to keep all my goods locked up. A boy about thirteen, living at Kurtatchi with his mother, but actually belonging to another village, had the reputation of being a thief (*ti a mot*). Every one knew this, and discussed it with disapprobation, and several people warned me not to allow him to come on to my verandah. But I never heard of his being punished for any definite theft, and I am uncertain how far the charges against him were true, and how far they were made because he did not really belong to the village, in which he was unpopular.

INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

As noted elsewhere in greater detail, a man's pigs and coco-nut palms, and a woman's taro, are used, on the death of the owner, to provide food for the people who come to wail. But it is not only the produce that is taken, the coco-nut palms are cut down—or were, until the practice was forbidden by the Government as wasteful—and the garden laid waste. If articles such as ornaments are put into the grave they are sometimes, but not always, broken. (See account of burying of pillow on p. 492.)

There are also other occasions on which property is intentionally

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

destroyed. The usual way of showing anger is to break up one's own personal possessions.[1] One day I heard a great commotion inside a hut, and on inquiring the reason, was told that two women had been fighting because one had eaten some pawpaw belonging to the other, who was very angry, and had, besides fighting the culprit, broken all her *own* pots; it was her howling that called my attention to the incident. It might be thought that the breakage was done accidentally in a fit of blind temper, but other instances indicate that it was far more likely to have been intentional. In my collection of stories there is one in which a man who, rebuffed in his efforts to have illicit sexual intercourse with a woman, ran away and hid when summoned to the shore for the punishment by shooting. The double injury, his undesired attentions and his cowardly attempt to escape from the consequences, angered the woman so much that she destroyed her own taro garden.

Other people's property may also be broken, with the owner's consent, for the same reason. A curious example occurred during my residence. The mission teacher at Tabut, a village friendly to and closely associated with Kurtatchi, had, with more zeal than discretion, been trying to stamp out the custom of wearing hoods in accordance with the rule that a woman must avoid her *waris*, He had even gone so far as to damage one of the hoods. This was reported at Kurtatchi, a more conservative village, and so incensed the women there that they made a descent on Tabut *en bloc* for the purpose of showing their displeasure. I was invited to go with them. We approached the village slowly, in a procession, with some show of ceremony. Every woman wore her hood, some even had two, one on the top of the other. The Tabut women received us amicably, and so far from resisting the destruction of their property, actually brought out their water coco-nuts to be broken up, though I fancy this was co-operation in self-defence, as they were careful to bring out old ones, whereas if left to themselves, the Kurtatchi women exercised no such discrimination. Pots were also brought out, and laid on the verandahs, but honour was apparently satisfied with this gesture, for no pots were actually broken on this occasion. When they considered that enough damage had been done, the Kurtatchi women went home, and no retaliation followed.

On another occasion the same thing took place at Kurtatchi.

[1] This is paralleled in other parts of Melanesia, cf. Ivens, 1927, p. 12.

On another occasion the same thing took place at Kurtatchi.

425 579 565 Some of the women went round to each hut breaking up water coco-nuts, the owners giving them old ones for the purpose. The reason was that the wife of one of the important men had called her husband a lazy good-for-nothing who spent all his time at dances and did no work. When a woman scolds her husband, if he is *tsunaun*, the other women go round breaking things from every house in the village, not only the house of the couple involved.

425 882 Intentional destruction of property also takes place on the occasion of the *wapi* ceremony as described on p. 203.

INHERITANCE

565 428 A man's official heir is his eldest sister's eldest son. If she has no son the second sister's son takes the position. Failing the sons of full sisters, a son of his mother's sister—for whom he uses the same kinship term—would be the heir. I did not meet with this contingency. It is of importance chiefly in the transmission of the position of *tsunaun tʃan*, the person of highest rank in the village. Pinari's eldest sister, Pari, had a son who died in childhood. The heir was, therefore, Kakari, the son of his younger sister Matev. He cannot alienate this right however much he may wish to do so. With it goes the right to direct certain ceremonies, and the official ownership of land. Wasē, Pinari's eldest son, held in Kurtatchi no official position, but was accorded a measure of respect by virtue of the importance of his father. But if he had been living in his mother's village he would there have been the person next but one in importance to the *tsunaun tʃan*, who was his mother's mother's brother, yielding only to the son of an elder sister of his mother. On the death of his mother's brother he had been sent to his father at Kurtatchi, and had elected to remain there.

428 789 Personal property, including ceremonial currency, can be, and often is, left to a man's own children instead of to his sister's children. The same applies to knowledge of special magic. Pinari, who had no great liking for his nephew, had passed on his knowledge of magic for making dogs hunt well to his son Wasē, and did not intend to give it to his sister's son Kakari, who would succeed him as *tsunaun*. He said that Kakari would have half his material possessions, and his own children would have the other half; Kakari would divide it.

Other magic may be similarly inherited in several ways, either from a father—real or classificatory—or from a mother's brother,